

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Patrick Buechner on Friday February 5, 2010.

The application has been amended as follows:

- **Please replace the listing of the claims with the following:**

Claim 1 (Currently Amended). A positioning apparatus, comprising:

a plug member having a longitudinal axis projecting from a first block and adapted for insertion into a positioning hole formed in a second block and having a plurality of slide outer surfaces formed on an outer periphery thereof.

a plurality of slide portions opposed to each other across the plug member in an opposed direction and arranged around the plug member and having slide inner surfaces which together with said slide outer surfaces are formed into substantially vertical flat surfaces parallel to said longitudinal axis for movement relative to said slide outer surfaces in a first radial direction substantially orthogonal to the opposed direction thereof,

a first pressing member diametrically expandably and diametrically contractibly and axially movably within a predetermined range arranged outside the slide portions,

a second pressing member diametrically expandably and diametrically contractibly and axially movably within a predetermined range arranged outside the slide portions and inside the first pressing member,

wherein the first pressing member is arranged to be driven toward the first block by a drive arrangement, such that the slide portions expand the first pressing member in said opposed direction which defines a second radial direction different from the first radial direction, and such that the slide portions are moved in the first radial direction with respect to the plug member.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1, including an inclined outer surface formed on the second pressing member, an inclined inner surface enabling a tapering engagement with the inclined outer surface formed on the first pressing member, an axially movable drive member arranged to be inserted into the plug member, said drive member connected to the first pressing member, said drive member being arranged to move the first pressing member toward the first block for locking to expand the first pressing member in the second radial direction by the tapering engagement and to bring the first pressing member into close contact with an inner peripheral surface of the positioning hole, and said drive member being also arranged to move the first pressing member toward a leading end for releasing the diametrically expanded condition of the first pressing member and thus releasing the closely contacted condition.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1, including an advancing arrangement configured to advance the first pressing member or the second pressing member toward a leading end.

Claims 4-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the first pressing member is formed in an annular shape.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 7, wherein a slit is formed in the first pressing member, said slit enabling the first pressing member to deform in a diametrically expanding direction and a diametrically contracting direction.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the second pressing member is formed in an annular shape.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 9, including a slit formed in the second pressing member, said slit enabling the second pressing member to deform in a diametrically expanding direction and a diametrically contracting direction.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 9, including gaps disposed between the second pressing member and the plug member in the first radial direction.

Claims 12-16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Previously Presented). The positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1, wherein the drive arrangement is configured to move the second block toward a base end via the first pressing member such that the first pressing member comes into close contact with an inner peripheral surface of the positioning hole, and presses a supported surface of the second block against a support surface of the first block.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented). A clamping system, comprising the positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented). A clamping system, comprising a plurality of positioning apparatuses, wherein at least one of which is a positioning apparatus as set forth in claim 1.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Hadi Shakeri whose telephone number is 571-272-4495. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Monica S. Carter can be reached on 571-272-4475. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

February 9, 2010

/Hadi Shakeri/
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